

## Message Text

PAGE 01 COLOMB 00997 201455 Z

45

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
----- 124986

O 201410 Z APR 73 ZFF-4

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9396

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 997

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OCON, IR, CE

SUBJ: DEPSEC VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA -- PROGRAM IN SRI LANKA

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY SISCO FROM  
AMBASSADOR

REF COLOMBO 982

1. AT 3 PM TODAY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
PROPOSED TO EMBASSY NUMBER OF REVISIONS IN YOUR VISIT PROGRAM  
BECAUSE OF UNPRECEDENTEDLY LARGE CROWDS EXPECTED FOR FUNERAL  
OF FORMERPM DUDLEY SENANAYAKE, AS DESCRIBED REFTEL. LATEST  
CHANGES INCLUDE: ( A ) USE OF SHUTTLE AIRCRAFT FROM BANDARANAIKE  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT ( WHERE 707 LANDS ) TO SMALLER RATMALANA AIR-  
PORT 8 MILES SOUTH OF COLOMBO, FROM WHICH YOU AND YOUR  
WIVES WOULD PROCEED BY MOTORCADE BY CIRCUITOUS ROUTE TO  
RESIDENCE; ( B ) REMAINDER OF PARTY WOULD STAY AT MT LAVINIA  
HOTEL NEAR SMALL AIRPORT BECAUSE IT WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO  
MOVE BY CAR TO GALLE FACE HOTEL; ( C ) PROBLEM OF CROWDS HAD  
LED PM TO RECONSIDER WHETHER SHE WOULD BE ABLE TO RETURN FROM  
FUNERAL IN TIME FOR HER APPOINTMENT WITH YOU AT 7:30 PM  
BUT AT MOMENT THAT MEETING STILL SCHEDULED: LADIES WOULD NOT,  
HOWEVER, GREET PM; ( D ) GROUP STAYING AT MT LAVINIA WOULD ALMOST  
CERTAINLY NOT BE ABLE TO MOVE THROUGH CROWDS TO RESIDENCE FOR  
DINNER; ( E ) MDFA WAS EVEN EXPLORING POSSIBILITY OF BOOKING  
MT LAVINIA GROUP IN ANOTHER HOTEL NEAR INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 COLOMB 00997 201455 Z

TO ELIMINATE NEED TO COME INTO COLOMBO AT ALL. ( PARTY IN ANY  
CASE WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REACH EMBASSY, AS IT WOULD HAVE

FROM GALLE FACE HOTEL.)

2. DESPITE PREVIOUS STEADY ASSURANCES, MOST RECENT OF WHICH I RECEIVED FROM MDFA DIRGEN MENDIS YESTERDAY, IT IS EVIDENT THAT PROPOSED CHANGES REFLECT GSL'S INCREASING APPREHENSION AND UNCERTAINTY ABOUT ITS ABILITY TO EFFECTIVELY AND SAFELY HANDLE VISIT. THIS PARTICULARLY UNDERSCORED BY LATEST ESTIMATE THAT AIRPORT ROAD WILL BE IMPASSABLE, BY SHIFT OF YOUR PARTY TO ANOTHER HOTEL, AND BY SUGGESTION THAT TIME OF APPOINTMENT WITH PM MAYONCE AGAIN HAVE TO BE ADJUSTED. BECAUSE OF INHERENT UNCERTAINTIES AND INCREASING RISKS INVOLVED, I IMMEDIATELY SOUGHT APPOINTMENT WITH PM BANDARANAIKE. SHE WAS UNABLE RECEIVE ME URGENTLY AND DESIGNATED VERNON MENDIS TO SEE ME IN HER STEAD.

3. I TOLD MENDIS THAT IN VIEW OF THESE LATEST PROPOSED CHANGES, IT WAS APPARENT THAT GSL IS NOW DEEPLY CONCERNED BY SECURITY AND CROWD CONTROL PROBLEMS WHICH HAD GROWN INCREASINGLY SERIOUS AND COULD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE. WE HAD BEEN PREPARED TO GO AHEAD WITH VISIT EVEN WHEN DATES CONFLICTED WITH FUNERAL OF FORMER PM SENANAYAKE BECAUSE GSL HAD INDICATED IT WANTED VISIT TO PROCEED AND WE WERE ASSURED IT COULD HANDLE PROBLEMS ARISING OUT OF FUNERAL. HOWEVER, SUCH CHANGES PROPOSED BY MDFA WERE VERY SUBSTANTIAL AND WE UNDERSTOOD THAT SERIOUS UNCERTAINTIES EVEN NOW CONTINUED AMONG MDFA OFFICIALS PLANNING SCHEDULE. AS MENDIS WAS AWARE, ANY UNTOWARD INCIDENT COULD MAR ENTIRE VISIT AND IT SEEMED TO ME THAT THERE WERE RISKS IN PRESENT SITUATION WHICH WERE NOT WORTH TAKING. THEREFORE I WANTED TO SUGGEST THAT BEST COURSE MIGHT BE FOR US TO MUTUALLY AGREE THAT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE TO FOREGO VISIT BECAUSE OF UNANTICIPATED CIRCUMSTANCES ARISING OUT OF FUNERAL. I SAID THAT WHILE I KNEW YOU WOULD BOTH BE DISAPPOINTED AT NOT HAVING OPPORTUNITY TO SEE PM, YOU WOULD FULLY UNDERSTAND WHY IT HAD BEEN NECESSARY TO MAKE THIS CHANGE. MOREOVER, SINCE PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT OF VISIT HAD NOT YET BEEN RELEASED, CANCELLATION SHOULD CAUSE NO EMBARRASSMENT TO GSL AND WOULD CERTAINLY NOT AFFECT CONTINUED VERY GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

4. DURING ENSUING DISCUSSION, MENDIS SAID THAT GSL HAD HOPED  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 COLOMB 00997 201455 Z

VISIT COULD COME OFF AS PLANNED AND HE BELIEVED SECURITY SITUATION IN HAND. HE ACKNOWLEDGED, HOWEVER, THAT PROJECTED CROWDS HAD GROWN FAR BEYOND GSL'S ORIGINAL ESTIMATES, THAT THERE WAS CONTINUED POSSIBILITY THAT PARTY AT MT LAVINIA HOTEL COULD BE CUT OFF FROM PRINCIPALS AND THAT TRANSFER OF ENTIRE GROUP TO SEPARATE AIRCRAFT AT BANDARANAIKE AIRPORT POSED ADDITIONAL COMPLICATIONS. HE ALSO AGREED THAT ATMOSPHERE FOR VISIT WAS IMPORTANT AND COULD BE DESTROYED IF CROWDS HELD UP MOVEMENT OF PARTY OR IF ANY INCIDENTS OCCURRED.

MENDIS EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING OF SUGGESTION THAT VISIT BE CALLED OFF BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT AND SAID HE WOULD CONVEY MY VIEWS AT ONCE TO PRIME MINISTER AND LET ME HAVE HER REACTION. HE ASKED WHAT LINE WE MIGHT TAKE IF THERE WERE QUERIES FROM PRESS. I SUGGESTED WE SAY: " BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES ARISING OUT OF FUNERAL OF FORMER PRIME MINISTER DUDLEY SENANAYAKE, TWO COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED NOT TO PROCEED WITH VISIT." HE SAID THIS LINE SEEMED SATISFACTORY TO HIM.

5. MENDIS TELEPHONED ME AT 7:00 P. M. TO SAY THAT HE HAD CONVEYED MY VIEWS AND CONCERNS TO THE PRIME MINISTER. SHE HAD SAID THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD AND APPRECIATED THESE CONCERNS BUT FELT THERE SHOULD BE NO PROBLEM ON SECURITY GROUNDS. SHE DID, HOWEVER, AGREE THAT BECAUSE OF VERY LARGE CROWDS ANTICIPATED FOR FUNERAL, CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTIES AND INCONVENIENCES MIGHT BE FACED BY DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH AND HIS PARTY IN MOVING ABOUT IN COLOMBO, IN KEEPING APPOINTMENTS

AND IN GENERALLY CARRYING OUT VISIT PROGRAM. CONSEQUENTLY, SHE CONCURRED WITH SUGGESTIONS WE CANCEL PRESENTLY SCHEDULED VISIT. SHE WISHED HER REGRETS TO BE CONVEYED TO DEPUTY SECRETARY RUSH AND MR. SISCO AND HOPED THAT, AFTER CONCLUSION OF TEHRAN MEETING, IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY AND PARTY TO VISIT SRI LANKA BEFORE RETURNING TO WASHINGTON. I TOLD MENDIS TO TELL PRIME MINISTER THAT I APPRECIATED HER UNDERSTANDING ON THIS MATTER AND THAT I WOULD CONVEY HER VIEWS TO YOU AT ONCE.

6. COMMENT: I VERY MUCH REGRET INCONVENIENCE CAUSED YOU, YOUR WIVES, AND YOUR PARTY BY THIS LAST- MINUTE DEVELOPMENT BUT BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE WE HAD NO OTHER SAFE AND PRUDENT COURSE UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES. I HOPE THAT, IF YOU REVERT TO YOUR EARLIER SCHEDULE, EXTRA DAY OF REST IN TEHRAN WILL HELP TO MAKE UP FOR MISSING THE CURRENTLY VERY UNCERTAIN PLEASURES  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 COLOMB 00997 201455 Z

OF SRI LANKA. AS I SAID ONCE BEFORE, WE WILL HAVE TO SAVE SRI LANKA FOR ANOTHER DAY. LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN TEHRAN.  
VAN H  
OLLEN

CONFIDENTIAL

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** Z  
**Capture Date:** 07 MAY 1999  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** n/a  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 20 APR 1973  
**Decaption Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** morefirh  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1973COLOMB00997  
**Document Source:** ADS  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** n/a  
**Film Number:** n/a  
**From:** COLOMBO  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1973/newtext/t19730460/abqceesb.tel  
**Line Count:** 153  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE  
**Office:** ACTION SS  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:**  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** EXDIS  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** morefirh  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 18 DEC 2001  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <18-Dec-2001 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by morefirh>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 980126  
**Subject:** DEPSEC VISIT TO SOUTH ASIA -- PROGRAM IN SRI LANKA  
**TAGS:** OCON, CE, IR, OCON  
**To:** NEW DELHI NIACT INFO STATE  
TEHRAN  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005